

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

## **MEMORANDUM**

DATE: SEPTEMBER 7, 2011

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: T&ES STAFF

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM # 8 - STAFF UPDATES

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**ISSUE:** Staff update to Commission on various ongoing projects

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Transportation Commission (Commission) receive the staff update.

**A. BRAC-133 UPDATE:**

- ✓ Occupancy of the BRAC-133 facility began August 9, 2011. The plans are to have 50-75 persons moved in daily, with  $\pm$  2,300 occupants by September 15, 2011,  $\pm$  another 2,600 by December 31, 2011, and the balance of  $\pm$  1,500 moved in by the end of 2012.
- ✓ VDOT is moving forward with the NEPA work by contracting for the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Long-term Road Improvements at Seminary Road and I-395 for which they have committed \$80 million in funding. This may include a HOV/Transit Ramp at I-395 and Seminary Road, with a design/build process to expedite construction. Public information meetings will be held in conjunction with BRAC-133 Advisory Group meetings, including a special, single-item meeting on September 7, 2011. The VDOT public hearing is scheduled for December 15, 2011.
- ✓ FHWA is moving forward with the NEPA work in the form of a Categorical Exclusion (CE) for the Short and Mid-term Road Improvements to key intersections adjacent to the Mark Center.
- ✓ Enhanced transit services in the form of express bus service provided by DASH between the King Street Metro Station and the Mark Center commenced August 8. The Department of Defense (DoD) is subsidizing the service so their employees and contractors can ride for free, and others can ride on a fare basis. This enhances transit opportunities for residents of the City and reduces SOV use generally.
- ✓ Transit services provided by WMATA in the form of an express shuttle service between the Pentagon and the Mark Center commenced August 8. This service is structured similarly to the DASH arrangement with DoD, but will operate the entire day at ten minute headways in both directions.

- ✓ Staff is moving forward with implementation of the Daytime Neighborhood Parking District adopted by City Council to address anticipated neighborhood parking encroachment issues resulting from the BRAC-133 facility.

## **B. CRYSTAL CITY / POTOMAC YARD TIGER GRANT**

The City received a grant for the Crystal City/Potomac Yard Transitway totaling \$8.5 million. The grant will be allocated to the design/build of the Route 1 Bus Rapid Transitway (BRT) between Monroe Avenue and Potomac Avenue in a dedicated transitway.

The selection of a consultant is underway with a request for qualifications (RFQ) from prospective firms due on August 22, 2011. The qualifications are under review and those firms that meet the minimum qualifications will be asked to submit proposals (request for proposals – RFP) due late September 2011.

It is anticipated that a design/build firm will be selected and under contract in the Fall of 2011.

The project will begin in Fall 2011 with construction completed in Winter 2013.

To date, no funds from this grant have been spent.

## **C. POTOMAC YARD METRO STATION**

The Potomac Yard Metro project is an infill Metrorail Station to be located between the current National Airport and Braddock Road Metrorail Stations on the blue and yellow lines and be located in the vicinity of the Potomac Yard Development.

The initial scoping process required as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to solicit public and agency input regarding alternative locations for the proposed Metrorail station was completed in May 2011, with the identification of alternatives to date – including those previously shown in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Station Concept Development Study* as well as those identified during scoping through meetings with all agencies involved/impacted by the potential project, two public meetings, and input from the project website.

City Council approved the creation of a Potomac Yard Metrorail Implementation Working Group (PYMIG) in June 2011 to work with staff and the project team to:

- a. Review Environmental Impact Statement documentation;
- b. Provide policy guidance to City and WMATA staff;
- c. Analyze station concept refinement; and
- d. Consider funding issues related to the new Metrorail Station.

Vice-Chair Jennifer Mitchell has been appointed to represent the Transportation Commission on the PYMIG. The first meeting of this working group was held on June 30, 2011 and presented the background of the project, an update on EIS Scoping process and what the next steps will be in the process.

The list of alternatives (shown in the attachment) included in the initial scoping process includes:

- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative A** would be located between the CSXT Railroad tracks and the Potomac Greens neighborhood, at the north end of the neighborhood. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.

- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative B1** would be located between the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the CSXT Railroad, north of Alternative A. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative B2** would be located between the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the CSXT Railroad, north of Alternative A and south of Alternative B1. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative B3** would be located between the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the CSXT Railroad, east of Alternative B2. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative C1** would be located between the CSXT Railroad and U.S. Route 1. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative C2** would be located between the CSXT Railroad and U.S. Route 1, southeast of Alternative C1. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative D1** would be located between the CSXT Railroad and U.S. Route 1, east of Alternative C2. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative D2** would be located between the CSXT Railroad and U.S. Route 1, east of Alternative D1. This alternative was included in the 2010 *Potomac Yard Metrorail Concept Development Study*.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative D3** would be located between the CSXT Railroad and the existing movie theater. This alternative was suggested during scoping.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative E1** would be located in Old Town Alexandria. This alternative was suggested during scoping.
- **Metrorail Station Location Alternative E2** would be located in the West End of Alexandria. This alternative was suggested during scoping.
- **VRE Station Alternative** would involve the construction of a new VRE station at Potomac Yard. This alternative was suggested during scoping.
- **Bus Alternative** which resulted from suggestions by participants during the scoping process is a non- Metrorail alternative including changes to area bus routes and improvements to the transportation network intended to support increased trips within the corridor and provide direct access to the regional Metrorail system.
- **Parking Garage Alternative** would include construction of a parking deck located off of U.S. Route 1 and is intended to accommodate trips with a destination in Potomac Yard. The alternative resulted from the scoping process.

The above list of alternatives will be evaluated as to their ability to meet the project goals and objectives including:

Project Goals	Project Objectives
Goal 1: Improve access to the regional Metrorail system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support WMATA's current system expansion plans for the Metrorail system</li> <li>• Support regional long-range transportation plans</li> <li>• Maximize access and minimize travel times for regional transit trips to and from existing and planned development in the Potomac Yard area</li> </ul>
Goal 2: Serve population and employment growth in the Potomac Yard area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximize accessibility of transit to existing and planned population and employment within the project study area</li> <li>• Support the City of Alexandria's redevelopment plans and transportation plans and policies for Potomac Yard and the U.S. Route 1 corridor</li> </ul>

Project Goals	Project Objectives
Goal 3: Accommodate projected travel demand and improve regional air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase transit ridership to and from the Potomac Yard area</li> <li>• Increase overall transit mode share for trips in the Potomac Yard area</li> <li>• Reduce automobile vehicle miles traveled</li> </ul>
Goal 4: Provide a cost-effective and financially feasible transportation investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximize ridership for existing transit infrastructure</li> <li>• Minimize capital and operating costs</li> <li>• Provide financially feasible transportation choices</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for private sector funding</li> </ul>
Goal 5: Enhance transportation and pedestrian safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize walking distances from the station to residential and commercial development</li> <li>• Maximize direct connections with surface transit services and planned pedestrian and bicycle facilities</li> <li>• Minimize potential for conflicts between pedestrians, transit users, and automobile traffic</li> </ul>

Note: Consistency with Goal 4 regarding cost-effectiveness and financial feasibility was not considered as part of this screening criterion. The alternatives are not yet developed to a sufficient level of detail to assess their cost-effectiveness, and their financial feasibility is considered separately as a later step in the screening analysis

The next steps include completing the screening process for the list of alternatives above and determining which alternatives will continue through the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) process.

The next meeting of the working group – to discuss the results of the screening process– is scheduled for October 13, 2011.

**ATTACHMENT:** Potomac Yard Metrorail Station EIS Initial Alternatives

# ATTACHMENT POTOMAC YARD METRORAIL STATION EIS INITIAL ALTERNATIVES

